

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:COCECIL:BH
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R 290132Z JAN 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 021974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, LE

SUBJECT: SAUDI DEMARCHE ON LEBANESE SITUATION

1. SAUDI AMBASSADOR, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS, MET JANUARY 27 WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON TO PRESENT SAUDI VIEWS ON LEBANESE SITUATION. QUOTING CABLE SENT FROM JIDDA ON JANUARY 26, ALIREZA STATED THAT IT IS SAG VIEW THAT US, UK, AND FRANCE CAN PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE BY (1) COUNSELING AGAINST ISRAELI INTERVENTION; (2) WORKING TO STOP THE FLOW OF ARMS FROM OVERSEAS; (3) ASSISTING ARAB EFFORTS TO CONFINE THE PROBLEM TO AN ARAB FRAMEWORK. ISRAELI INTERFERENCE, CONCLUDED ALIREZA, WOULD VERY LIKELY LEAD TO A WAR HARMING THE INTERESTS OF THE THREE GREAT POWERS.

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2. MR. ATHERTON AGREED THAT THE USG POSITION WAS TO PREVENT OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, INCLUDING ISRAELI; THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE TO STOP THE FLOW OF ARMS TO THE CONFLICTING PARTIES; AND THAT THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED WITHIN LEBANON AMONG LEBANESE PARTIES. NOT ONLY DO WE AGREE TO THESE POINTS, SAID MR. ATHERTON, BUT WE HAVE ALSO BEEN ACTIVE IN THIS REGARD: WE HAVE HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS, AND HAVE EVEN SAID PUBLICLY THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION. CONFIDENTIALLY, CONTINUED ATHERTON, THE USG INITIATED DISCUSSIONS WITH

OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES SEEKING WAYS TO STOP THE FLOW OF ARMS. THE USG ITSELF HAS ISSUED NO LICENSES FOR THE EXPORT OF ARMS TO ANY PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM IN DAMASCUS, SAID MR. ATHERTON, NOTING THAT ARMS HAVE BEEN COMING BOTH FROM SYRIA AND FROM ABROAD. THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFIC IS NEVERTHELESS HARD TO STOP; ILLEGAL METHODS ARE OFTEN EMPLOYED. FINALLY, WE HAVE TOLD VARIOUS LEBANESE LEADERS THAT THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE TREATED AS AN INTERNAL LEBANESE AFFAIR; WE HAVE SENT TWO MESSAGES OF SUPPORT TO PRIME MINISTER KARAME IN THIS REGARD. ATHERTON CONTINUED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS HE WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE. SYRIAN ACTIONS HAVE HELPED THE CEASE-FIRE TAKE HOLD, AND THE PROPOSALS TO RESTRUCTURE THE GOVERNMENT TO REFLECT THE NEW POLITICAL REALITIES SEEM USEFUL. WE HAVE TOLD THE SYRIANS THAT WE THINK THEIR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN HELPFUL. WE HAVE ALSO STRONGLY DISCOURAGED TALK OF PARTITION. IN ALL RESPECTS, ATHERTON CONCLUDED, IT SEEMS WE ARE FULLY IN AGREEMENT WITH SAG VIEWS. KISSINGER

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